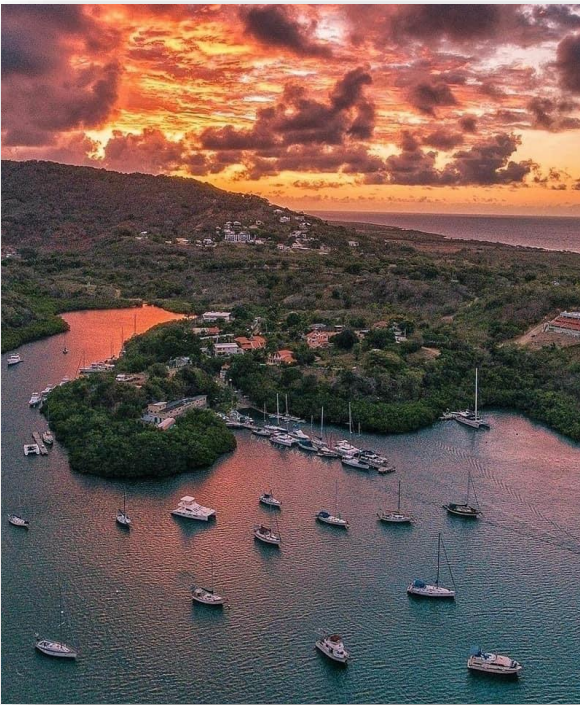




Cruising Feature – Dominican Republic



It's not a destination that's regularly on the top of sailors' to-do lists, but the Dominican Republic is proving to be a spot that's rather an enticing option for Cruisers. That's what former SA resident Denise Simpson discovered a number of years ago – and now she's helping others enjoy what the Caribbean island has to offer.

“I was born in the UK and lived in SA from 1975 until I sailed from Cape Town to Grenada in 2010 with my now 19-year-old daughter. We spent 10 years in Grenada (four of which were owning a marine service company). Then I sailed for six months with my daughter and my American partner and the ship's cat up to Luperón, Dominican Republic two years ago,” she explained.

Simpson and her partner are now joint port officers for Ocean Cruising Club UK and the Seven Seven Seas Cruising Association USA where they assist cruisers with information on the Dominican Republic and settle them in.

Asked what this involves on a day-to-day basis, Simpson explained: “Marketing our hurricane hole anchorage and the whole of the Dominican Republic via Facebook etc, communication by phone, email, vhf and face to face regarding arrivals and all cruising and tourist information and co-ordinating arrivals with the Armada/navy.”

Having lived in the Caribbean for over 10 years now, Simpson has met plenty of interesting people on her travels.

“There are too many to mention. My favourites are always my fellow ocean cruising club members due to their long-distance worldwide cruising stories.

“We are also good friends with Bruce van Sant in DR who wrote ‘The Gentleman's guide to passages South: The Thornless Path to Windward’ so we share many amusing stories going back over 30 or more years. Then of course living in an expat anchorage in a tiny town is always amusing to say the least.”

In comparing the sailing conditions and lifestyle in the Dominican Republic compared to South Africa, Simpson explained: "In Luperón you sail the coastline in the night lee or get nowhere going south. There are not many ports on the north coast (three) compared to the southern coast which is beautiful but more expensive.

"Living in the DR is very reasonable compared to the rest of the Caribbean, (just affordable for some SA cruisers). Its local people are very friendly, and humble in the country areas. You must learn Spanish to enjoy it fully as it's a huge island with so much to offer and learn about. In the country areas you are safe to walk around night or day. There is theft, but not much violent crime unless in the cities after dark."

Apart from that, the exchange rate is favourable for South Africans to visit. Anyone keen checking out what the Dominican Republic has to offer can contact:

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